

# THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

---

Volume IX

JULY 1954

No. 97

---

## CONTENTS

THE MISSIONER	The Editor	2
THE WORD	Adrian Dowling	5
ST THOMAS AND THE WORD OF GOD	Roland Potter	7
ST BONIFACE: APOSTLE OF GERMANY	Aelred Squire	11
THE SYMBOL OF THE MOUNTAIN	D. D. C. Pochin Mould	17
OUR APPROACH TO OTHER CHRISTIANS	Michael Richards	20
SPIRITUAL STUDIES IN ENGLAND	David L. Greenstock	25
REVIEWS: Oswin Magrath, Richard Blundell, A. J. Meikle, Gerard Meath, Egbert Cole, John M. Todd, etc.		33
NOTICES: Non-Catholic Spirituality		44
Other Works		46
EXTRACTS		46

---

Contributors are encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers. *Literary Communications* to be addressed to The Editor, The Life of the Spirit, Spode House, Rugeley, Staffs. (Telephone: Armitage 331.) The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted, and no MS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Subscriptions, Orders and Communications regarding *Advertisements* should be addressed to the Manager, Blackfriars Publications, 34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1 (Museum 5728). Annual Subscription 17s. 6d. post free (U.S.A. \$2.50). *Binding*: Orders and Enquiries for binding volumes of the review may be sent to the Kemp Hall Bindery, 33 St Aldate's, Oxford.

## THE MISSIONER

THE EDITOR

WE picture the missionary as a rather special type of priest, one who travels from parish to parish, armed with special weapons for overpowering the sinner and capturing him for God. The missionary, in the modern idiom, is a preacher who knows how to use the flames of hell and the never-dying worm to advantage where the heart is bent on self, but can turn towards the love and mercy of God when he recognizes a crack in the stony heart of his hearer. He may be a Billy Graham or a Herbert Vaughan, but he is always a very special type of man, prepared in a special way for his particular mission. The word 'missionary' has, too, been distinguished from that of 'missioner' which has also come to be limited in common parlance to a special type of preacher, one who travels to distant heathen lands to bring the Christian message to those who have remained until now in ignorance of the Gospel. The missionary moves in the virgin jungles of Africa while the missioner is found in the tangled, heathenized streets of the industrial town.

Faced with this restricted use of the two words which might otherwise have been employed for the universal duty of every Christian, we have of late turned to another term that hitherto had an equally specialized significance, that of the apostle. But although the modern Christian has gradually grown accustomed to the idea of the universal apostolate, the word 'apostle' quite naturally retains a restricted sense since Christ himself selected the twelve from among all his other followers and these twelve have been succeeded by the specially chosen and ordained members of the hierarchy.

We need a word that will effectively convey to every baptized Christian the fact that he has a mission, that he has received from the Holy Spirit powers that are not simply for his own sanctification. He has been sent to convey the grace of Christ to anyone and everyone who lack this gift that is essential to their life and happiness. It is in fact an obligation on every follower of our Lord to take the Gospel to those who have never heard it and to crack the hard hearts of those who have heard yet turned away in their



search for self. He has not received the full powers of the successor of the Apostles, neither has he necessarily been sent to foreign parts, nor yet need he acquire the tricks of the hell-fire merchant. Yet he must play his part as a living member of the Church which as a whole, as the Body of Christ, is apostolic and missionary. The mission of our Lord is unavoidably shared by those who follow him and one who refuses the obligation to be a missionary, a missionary or an apostle can no longer presume to call himself a Christian.

This missionary duty implies a firm foundation on Christ himself, an increasing grasp of the mysteries that are taught in a single Word, and a constant readiness to sacrifice self-interest and comfort for the sake of those who for any reason whatever know not Christ. The true missionary never preaches himself; he is not angered by attacks on his Church and faith because anger reveals a fear and a desire to preserve self against attack. This is perhaps one of the most difficult things for the convinced Christian to acquire. He is identified by the very life of our Lord with the Church, and yet he may so easily identify the Church with himself and try to draw it within the narrow limitations of his own life and points of view. The would-be missionary who unconsciously defends himself with wrath against attacks on *his* teaching or *his* practice will never prepare the way for the grace of God to convert others. 'There is no wrath in God', and the missionary must overcome his hasty temper and harsh words if he is to share in the work of God.

The only way to achieve this equilibrium is to turn from the little mound of self to the great mountain, the eternal rock that is Christ. The mountains which always appeared as the habitation of gods and spirits now stand as the permanent, unshakable sign of Christ established from age to age with none but surface changes, while the men and women of the world move around like the passing, formless clouds that so often conceal the heights. The Christian who stands on these heights has something other than his own convictions and opinion to support him. His faith that he seeks to impart to others is not a fabricated, humanly acquired judgment of what appears to him; it is a gift by which he surrenders himself to the unique truth, expressed in the single Word which was made flesh. This surrender implies the sacrifice of the most essential of man's human treasures, his freedom of judgment.

Truth like the mountain is before him, some parts appear to him and he can judge by his human faculties of their objective reality, but the whole is so vast and so high that he must accept without 'natural' evidence the truth uttered from the mountain top.

In practice this means a self-effacement that allows a man to be impressed by the truth of the Word instead of the man impressing his own words upon the moving reality around him. The desire of fallen man is to make his own world, to force his own muse which springs up from within him upon the outside world. But the one who stands on the rock of Christ is aware of the universe around him forming him, placing him where he is and so eventually sending him forth, formed anew by the divine powers. This is the beginning of the true missionary, when he has lost himself and found Christ, or rather when he has been by his own self-forgetfulness formed into the image of the Christ, the anointed mediator between God and man. Every Christian is thus formed sacramentally by Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. But so often he clings on to himself, he refuses to accept this 'death' of the Cross, he makes the doctrine his own, he turns dogma into his own opinion. In this he resists the inner power of the sacraments and refuses the mission. He weakly falls back on the distinction between lay and cleric in order to justify his refusal, closing his eyes to the fact that he is a member of the missionary Church, the Messiah yet on earth. These distinctions are well enough when it is a question of allotting different activities to different members, but it is unfortunate that the necessary insistence on the essential place of the layman in the Church has tended to separate him from the totality of the Church in his own mind. Essentially the mission of every baptized Christian is the same, to share with the whole world what it is impossible for him to contain within the limits of his own soul. Every Christian is a missionary, or a missionary or an apostle, whatever term we choose to employ. He has been given the Word, and the Word must be uttered, and the Word cannot be uttered until he has overcome himself. Pentecost formed the apostles when they had over a period of several years gradually abandoned their own idea of what the Messiah and the Kingdom of God should be. When at last they were given the full share of the Word they could stand forth before the whole gathering of men from all ends of the earth and call them BRETHREN.



## THE WORD

ADRIAN DOWLING, O.P.

**G**OD spoke and the world began. God uttered his word and the echo will not die since reality is that echo. 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there: if I descend into hell, thou art present.' For evermore we shall be within earshot of God. 'See how the skies proclaim God's glory, how the vault of heaven betrays his craftsmanship! Each day echoes its secret to the next, each night passes on to the next its revelation of knowledge; no word, no accent of theirs that does not make itself heard, till their utterance fills every land, till their message reaches the ends of the world.' (Ps. 18.) The trees speak in their fashion, and the birds in the trees; the fields in spring; the waves roar entrance along the whole coastline. All echo the word of God.

Yet, these we can banish, these we can escape. There are few birds and fewer trees in the *culs-de-sac* of our cities, and the sea and the fields are secure in their allotted places. We may be safe from the word. And man, that image of the Imageless, that replica of God, must he defy our precious privacy? Need he proclaim the attributes of his Fashioner? He was proved fickle from the very outset; and we, we men, can be more faithless still.

Who has not seen our herd, thoughtless and uncouth, with downcast eyes, predatory, depraved, wherever man may be? We make iconoclasts look small, we who can write the message of the beast o'er all the handiwork of our Creator. A little lower than the angels is not too far removed from being beasts. The word must find a more effectual way.

In the long night before the dawn God spoke by the voice of his nightingales, the Prophets, and at the dawn, through the greatest of all his singing-birds, his only Son; throughout the day that has ensued the lowliest of songsters gives voice to him. Formerly, men sought respite between outbursts in the long silence of night; excuses, however meagre, could be sought and proffered. But never again shall we escape: we are caught up in a continual hymn of praise, an unceasing chorus of merciful love, the sacrament of God's dwelling with us men. 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us', Love has invaded the inner ring of

our defences: the wall of partition has been thrown down. 'He has made captivity captive.' That word more piercing than any two-edged sword has divided man against himself. God will not be ignored. All else has been ignored and we are quite alone and Christ is of our number. Man is more nearly yet a son of God.

Over the din of the traffic, in the shrill cries of the street arabs and hawkers Christ speaks to us. Through a mother's eyes he watches the comings and goings of a myriad small feet; still broken and abandoned, he dozes fitfully through the long night in a thousand furnished rooms; tired and insecure, he picks his way through the garbage pails. Each day his Passion is renewed next door. 'For inasmuch as you did it to these little ones, you did it to me.' We can root out of man the vestiges of power, we can deface each line of beauty, bring him low even to the very dust from whence he came; and we have Christ before us. We have depicted of a surety the very image of the Son of God. 'He will watch this servant of his appear among us, unregarded as a brushwood shoot, as a plant in waterless soil; no stateliness here, no majesty, no beauty, as we gaze upon him, to win our hearts. Nay, here is one despised, left out of all human reckoning; bowed with misery, and no stranger to weakness; how should we recognize that face? How should we take any account of him, a man so despised?' (Isaias 53.) 'And they spat upon him, and took the rod from him and beat him over the head with it.' (Matt. 27. 30.) No longer is there safety in numbers, for each proclaims the triumph or the needs of Christ afresh. Man is a memory of the Incarnation, who preaches inadvertently the word of God.

'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' But how can we fail to hear him, joyous, plaintive, beseeching? At every turn we are confronted with his presence, challenging, insistent; Christ waits for us at every corner, in every street we see and speak to him. We would seek refuge in ourselves did not our catalogue of tragedies peel off the crust we show for false security. Indeed, thou hast conquered, O Galilean.

'A message to thee from the Truth, the faithful and unerring witness, the source from which God's creation began: I know of thy doings, and find thee neither cold nor hot; cold or hot, I would thou wert one or the other. Being what thou art, lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, thou wilt make me vomit thee out of my



mouth. I am rich, thou sayest, I have come into my own; nothing now is wanting to me. And all the while, if thou didst but know it, it is thou who art wretched, thou who art to be pitied. Thou art a beggar, blind and naked; and my counsel to thee is, to come and buy from me what thou needest: gold, proved in the fire, to make thee rich, and white garments, to clothe thee, and cover up the nakedness which dishonours thee; rub salve, too, upon thy eyes, to restore their sight. It is those I love that I correct and chasten; kindle thy generosity, and repent. See where I stand at the door, knocking; if anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I will come in to visit him, and take my supper with him, and he shall sup with me.' (Apoc. 3.) The word is all around us: that word that breatheth forth love, that calls us home into the heart of God.

'Lord, that I might hear!', that I too might know thee in such homely things as the breaking of bread.



## ST THOMAS AND THE WORD OF GOD<sup>1</sup>

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

**T**HIS Word of life which was from the beginning, which we have heard and seen with our own eyes, have gazed upon and our very hands have handled—this it is which we proclaim unto you. . . . (I John, I, I.) With burning love and earnestness St John speaks of that knowledge and first-hand contact with the Lord Jesus which was his privilege. And now he can use these same words of the great Saint and Doctor St Thomas Aquinas. For he too loved our Lord, constantly and above all else, and by long familiarity with the things of God and long gazing upon the truths of God was enabled supremely to proclaim to thousands of others the saving truths of God.

But let us start, as St Thomas would surely start, with the Word of God; and meditate *not* on St Thomas and the Word of God, but on 'The Word of God and St Thomas'.

'This Word of life, which was from the beginning . . . this it is

<sup>1</sup> The substance of an address delivered on the feast of St Thomas Aquinas, 1954, at Blackfriars, Oxford.

which we proclaim unto you. . . .’ This Word ‘from the beginning’ reminds us of the creative activity of the Word or utterance of God. From the opening pages of Scripture we are taught how the world was fashioned by the Word of God appearing as a cosmic power: ‘God said let there be light’ . . . ‘and by thy Word thou didst fashion man’ (Wisdom 9,1). Creation is a work of God’s word; it is also a *revelation*. God declared his perfections, showed himself when he ‘uttered’ the word. He created the world with a clear message which man, his creature too, should have read: ‘for the invisible things of God are made clear from the things that are seen’. God intended that man should know the Creator from creatures, and knowing him, should draw nigh unto him.

Yet in cold fact, mankind did not and does not wish to know him thus. The first ‘Word’ of God resulted in failure on man’s part to respond. For this reason, it would seem, God chose for himself a special people, his own heritage, a people to whom he could speak more clearly, more intimately, more lovingly. A people who were to be depositories of the secrets of God, mysteriously wedded unto God as a bride unto her husband, to whom God would lovingly say ‘you shall be my people and I will be your God’.

This loved and chosen people was held to God by a Covenant or Charter. So that they might remain faithful to its terms, God spoke yet again through the Law or Sacred Teaching. Thus the Commandments are just so many ‘words’ of God, and ‘word’ comes to be used for ‘law’ (as in Psalm 118). Word, too, comes to mean not a load of particular precepts but rather ‘an incarnation of all divine revelation’; and the Law remains fundamentally kindly. God is compassionate, ‘making the people come from the house of bondage’.

Then as time went on, God again and again spoke through his prophets: ‘The spirit of the Lord has spoken by me and his word by my word’ (2 Sam. 23, 2). ‘The Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth, and said unto me: Behold I have put my words in thy mouth’ (Jer. 1, 9). Constantly, too, we read: ‘Man of God’ . . . ‘Thus says Yahweh . . .’

Yet, in spite of all, and the wonder of it all, Israel in the main failed to respond, and that after his creation and revelation, after his choosing and Law, and after his prophets. And so finally God sent his Son in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . ‘and the



word was made flesh and pitched his tent among us and we saw his glory . . . ' (John I, 14). 'Having spoken to the Fathers of old through the prophets, in these days he has spoken through his son . . . ' (Heb. I, 1). 'The love of God was made clear to us when he sent his only-begotten son into the world . . . ' (I John 4, 9-10). 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . tribulation, famine, distress . . . ?' (Rom. 8, 35-39.)

Not only has the Word of God penetrated into time, entered the course of all history and profoundly modified it, so that we now live in a world redeemed. In this sense our religion is historical. But further, in the course of that long history, the word of God came, in part at least, to be written. So that our religion is also a religion of the Book, in this case God's Book, because God is Author above the many human authors.

St Thomas saw clearly the parallel between the Word Incarnate and God's book of the written Word, written for our salvation. 'If the Word of God is the Son of God, and all the words of God have a certain likeness to this word, we ought gladly to hear the words of God. . . . As the Word was made flesh in all things like unto us, sin excepted, so the Holy Scriptures were composed like other books in all things error excepted.' (Cf. Pius XII. *Divino Afflante*.)

The first 'Scriptures' were the words of God written on the tablets of the Law or Teaching. And then they came often to be written by the prophets; and then to be commented upon, expounded, developed in many holy writings. Finally there is a completion in the New Testament, which tells of the Word made flesh and with us to the end of time.

*Se nascens dedit socium*

*Convalescens in edulium.*

This is a brief foreshadowing and prophecy of that end when the heavenly Jerusalem will come to be and God will take his own to himself and wipe away the tears from every eye.

The New Testament tells of the fulness of time, and the fulness of time has brought with it a fulness of truth, and so a sort of finality and new order in the things of God.

With the death of the last apostle there is no new Revelation, but the conveying of a truth once delivered: 'the deposit' to be guarded.

So the Church comes to need, and ever has, Doctors of this

Truth of God who are first of all faithful servants of the Word of God, who, without being strangers to their own age, yet have a message from every age, because that message is God's and not theirs.

Such a faithful servant of the Word was the great lover of God, St Thomas. He lived with God, thought and spoke of God. Years of prayer and study gave him a familiarity with the Word Incarnate. Stories are told of how our Lord spoke to him. Stories are told, too, of his immense concentration on the things of God; of his immense capacity for work at the things of God (he was said to have dictated to four secretaries at once . . .). Anyway, he certainly had exceptional gifts of mind and heart, a lucid intelligence, a flair for the sense of Scripture (which at times amazes those who think to have modern advantages in exegesis), understanding, wisdom, and much else. With all this went an utter humility and child-like innocence of life (his dying confession resembled that of a little child), and an order of preferences which we might profitably reflect upon: he would have given the whole fair city of Paris in exchange for St John Chrysostom's commentaries on St Matthew.

In his service of the Word he particularly excelled in utter fidelity and reverence to the Word, written or unwritten. He championed the veracity of Scripture, and put order, distinctions and clarity into the difficult subject of Scriptural senses. He had a sense of style and stressed the author's intent, and above all stood for a theological view of Scripture, and therein no doubt was his greatest achievement.

★   ★   ★

After an immense labour of years in faith and reasoning, he approached the end. For a moment all the toil, all the writing seemed mere rubbish. He whose genius had won the Church to a baptism of Aristotle; who had so read the Fathers that he is said to have participated in the wisdom of all; who all his life in faith and love had known and taught the Word and Word of God—would seem at the end to have approached unto a glimpse of 'what eye has not seen nor ear heard'. Be that as it may. Today we have much new knowledge, many new disciples. To hold to the one thing necessary, to relay God's truth, to be faithful to the Word of God, let us pray for something of the mind and heart of our brother St Thomas.



## ST BONIFACE, APOSTLE OF GERMANY

AELRED SQUIRE, O.P.

THE Church of God, quickened by the Spirit given at Pentecost, is alive even in her past. Her saints do not depend upon any human memorial to keep their name living, for they rejoice already in an undying communion with all the faithful in whom God's grace is operative and, like a cloud of compassionate witnesses, they support by their prayers those who still struggle to live as they lived and die as they died. It is, then, to rescue ourselves from our forgetfulness that it is good to recall a great English missionary who, on 5th June, 754, twelve centuries ago this summer, was killed by a band of the people he had already given his life to convert.

Wynfrith—it was only later that he took the Latin name, Boniface—was born in the West-Saxon country beyond Selwood a little before 675.<sup>1</sup> Sent as a boy of four or five to a monastery at Exeter for his education, he there acquired a love of the religious life which the opposition of his father was unable to root out. Perhaps the reputation of its studies or of its abbot, Winbert, to whom he became devoted, attracted him to the monastery of Nursling, a house which lay between Winchester and Southampton, where he completed his formation in a way of life whose framework was the rule of St Benedict, much as it must have been lived at Monte Cassino in the days of the Father of Western monks. Its division of time between reading, manual labour, and the daily routine of domestic duties, the whole pervaded by the atmosphere of the psalms, was one which he was afterwards to establish wherever possible as the anchor-hold of infant Churches, and upon which he himself depended, his last wish being to be buried at the abbey of Fulda, a foundation of his own in the land

<sup>1</sup> The materials for the life of St Boniface are quite exceptionally ample and reliable. The following brief study is based mainly on the letters and the contemporary life by the monk Willibald. A text of these will be found in Migne, P. L. LXXXIX, but better editions are, for the letters, that of Ernst Dummlet in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi*, I (Berlin, 1892), and for the early lives, W. Levison, *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini*, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, (Hanover Leipzig, 1905). A readily accessible book for the general background of the period is the excellent Pelican, *The Beginnings of English Society* by Dorothy Whitelock. Its bibliography will be a guide to anyone who wishes to go further. In the present article the quotations from the letters are given in the translation of Edward Kylie, *The English Correspondence of St Boniface* (London, 1911).

of his labours. It was not long before his talent and insight, particularly in the study of the Scriptures, found Boniface the head of the monastic school at Nursling and, indeed, it was that same love of Scripture which became the source of his power and persuasiveness as a preacher. His influence with both men and women extended well beyond the circle of his own community.

Local success, and the choice of him as representative of the Church of his region in a dispute which had to be referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury, led everyone to anticipate a distinguished future for him, but already a desire for foreign places was stirring in him. This desire his abbot wisely restrained for a time, but eventually yielded to it. In 716, with two or three companions, and funds provided by his monastery, Boniface made his way to London in search of a ship. His thoughts were turning to the German peoples across the sea.

There is nothing more mysterious than the vocation of a saint. St Paul tells us that God's true sons are those who are led by the Spirit of God. But the Spirit also drives. Indeed, the Hebrew verb for the Spirit 'moving' on the chaotic waters before the Creation is more accurately rendered 'beating', and recalls the mother bird forcing her reluctant young ones to fly. Whatever were the interior and secret impulses compelling Boniface—he later describes them in a letter to an abbess as a combination of 'the fear of Christ and the love of faring abroad'—there is also in his own monastic background a tradition which makes them intelligible. For the monasticism whose fervour was the characteristic mark of Christian beginnings in England had, from the first, been allied to a strongly missionary spirit. St Augustine, the apostle of England, was himself a monk, and he came to a country where, in the north, monasteries of the Celtic type were already in existence, largely as a result of the thirst for the sacrifice of exile, which was so frequently in evidence at that period. In one of these Northumbrian monasteries, Lindisfarne, St Wilfred, the first to be interested in the German apostolate, was trained, and the admiration for Benedictine observance with which he, and later St Benedict Biscop, returned from Rome, did not diminish the widespread feeling for missionary work in monasteries like Nursling, whose allegiance to the Holy Rule was probably due, in large measure, to them.

And so Boniface took to 'the fields of the sea'. Its waves and



storms are the image which comes again and again when in later years he writes home of his work in the mission field. The ship he found in London was returning to Wijk by Duurstede, in those days an important trading depot about twelve miles north-east of Utrecht. It was not a particularly propitious moment to arrive, for the heathen Radbod, king of the Frisians, had just recovered a considerable territory from the Christian duke of the Franks, Charles Martel, and was actively engaged in the restoration of pagan shrines. The work directed by St Willibrord, another Northumbrian monk, had had to be suspended and, after an unprofitable summer, Boniface took an autumn boat back to England. The journey had been merely a first reconnaissance.

Soon after his return to Nursling its abbot, Winbert, died, and the community did its best to persuade Boniface to consent to fill his place. Boniface, however, could not rest. He was determined, as his biographer says, 'to fulfil his predetermined purpose'. After a consultation with his friend Bishop Daniel of Winchester, an alternative appointment was made and, carrying with him the bishop's commendatory letters, Boniface set out for Rome to lay before the Pope the cause so dear to his heart. In Rome during the winter and spring of 718-19 he had the opportunity of discussing his plans with Pope Gregory II, being officially commissioned in May for the work in Germany.

Turning north, Boniface began to teach in Thuringia, but news of the death of Radbod gave him the chance to join Willibrord in Frisia and he worked there for three years. It was, we may imagine, a kind of noviciate under a man of experience. However, in 722, declining to accept consecration as Willibrord's assistant and successor, Boniface took his own area in Hesse. Here he founded a monastic cell and by the power of his preaching made thousands of converts. Indeed, the numbers were so embarrassing that he felt it necessary to refer again to Rome for further instructions. With the autumn of 722 he was in Rome a second time and, on 30th November, received consecration as bishop over the new area. He returned through the Frankish kingdom with letters of commendation addressed to Charles Martel.

Being now a bishop, Boniface's first task was to conduct a widespread confirmation among his new converts. It was not, of course, to be thought that heathen practices would disappear immediately and, indeed, even open sacrifice to trees and springs

continued. One such pagan shrine—its exact situation is uncertain—was the scene of the famous incident of the felling of the oak of Thor, from the wood of which Boniface built an oratory dedicated to St Peter. It is an incident which inevitably recalls St Benedict cutting down the groves which stood where Monte Cassino was to rise.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that a kind of fanatical violence characterized Boniface's missionary methods. His true approach is probably far better illustrated by his correspondence with Bishop Daniel of Winchester whom he often consulted and for whose opinions he had a profound regard. There is a balanced and gentle wisdom in the long letter in which Bishop Daniel outlines his conception of missionary procedure. He thinks it useless to enter into questions of the genealogy of false gods and similar apologetic arguments. It is much better not to discuss whether the gods really exist or not, but rather to show that if they were indeed begotten after the human manner, then they are simply men and women like ourselves, and the whole creation and government of the world has still to be explained. Boniface is to lead the people gradually to adopt for themselves an attitude of self-criticism. 'These questions . . . thou shouldst propose to them in no irritating or offensive manner, but with the greatest calmness and moderation . . . so that the heathen more out of confusion than exasperation may blush for their absurd opinions.' In answer to another letter of Boniface explaining his difficulty in avoiding public intercourse with the numerous influential priests who have lapsed into paganism or are leading scandalous lives, Bishop Daniel adopts the same moderate tone. 'You must at least bear with perseverance what you cannot cure by correction. . . . From intercourse with false brethren or priests, what counsel could avail to separate thee in bodily things, unless perchance thou art to withdraw entirely from this world.' He urges our Lord's own example in sitting down to supper with sinners, and his parable of the wheat and tares which are allowed to grow together until the harvest.

What a bond of sympathy existed between these two men on either side of the waters! 'This in your loving kindness you should know', writes the ageing bishop from England, 'that though we are separated by a wide stretch of land and the immensity of the sea, and the uneven climate of the sky, yet we are oppressed by



the same burden of suffering. Satan's activity is the same here as there. . . . They are the closing words of a reply to a letter in which Boniface had written to console the bishop on the loss of his sight and had sent him 'as a sign of true love, a coverlet, not silken, but shaggy, mixed with goats' wool, to cover your feet.' The letters and the gift are typical of the intimate and kindly exchanges which the seasonal ships facilitated between Boniface and friends in his home country. A large number of them, indeed, now came over to help him, and those who stayed in England supported him by their prayers or showered him with marks of affection, not only the handsome 'silver bowl, lined with gold, weighing three pounds and a half, and two cloaks' which came from Ethelbert, king of Kent, but the altar linen sent by English nuns, sometimes with whatever money they could spare.

The role of women in this correspondence of Boniface is, in fact, of considerable importance. It must be remembered that he had come from a country where double monasteries for men and women, often ruled over by an abbess, were not only common, but were outstanding for their learning and religious observance. Of these, the abbey of Whitby under St Hilda is probably the most famous, but there were many others besides. It was a type of religious life which Boniface strove to promote in the mission country, and one of the most outstanding women who helped him was Leofgyth, a pupil of his friend Eadburg, abbess of Minster in Thanet. Many of those who could not join him either wrote or procured the books by which, as a lifelong student, he set such store. Here an experienced abbess or a young nun would write for spiritual advice, there another would send latin verses for his criticism. He found time for them all, busy as he was, and rarely failed to comply promptly with their requests. 'I beseech thee in God's name, my dearest sister, nay, mother and sweet lady', he wrote to one, 'to pray for me constantly, because for my sins I am worn out by tribulations and disturbed much more by anxiety and mental care than by bodily toil. Be assured that the old confidence between us never fails.' It was not surprising that so many looked to him for consolation. In a neatly-turned letter, which employs a quotation from St Jerome, one nun writes: 'Therefore, believe me, not so eagerly does the storm-tossed sailor long for the harbour, nor the thirsting fields crave rain, nor the anxious mother on the curved shore await her son, as I long for a

sight of thee. . . . Wherefore, a sinner, cast at thy feet, out of my heart's inmost recesses, I have called to thee, O my father, from the borders of the world, that, as my soul requires, thou shouldst raise me upon the rock of thy prayers.'

Continuously on the road, suffering from hunger and thirst and cold, Boniface worked on for ten years. In recognition of his immense achievement Pope Gregory III sent him the archbishop's pallium in 732, and in 738 we find him in Rome a third time, this occasion being the prelude to the introduction of a regular diocesan organization in southern Germany. Boniface returned, and within a few years had founded several new sees in a country where he had started with one little chapel. Moreover Pippin, after the retirement of Carloman his brother, was left sole successor to the Frankish Charles Martel and, though he did it for political reasons, supported Boniface in a thorough reform of his own region. Church synods, unheard of even in this Christian area for many years, were once again convened and the culmination of a period of intense activity was the solemn anointing of Pippin as king of the Franks in 751.

Boniface, however, was ageing rapidly. He had long before had to send to England for a copy of the Prophets in larger writing because 'with my eyes growing dim I cannot well distinguish minute and connected letters'. He realized that he must appoint a successor. He therefore consecrated Lul, his disciple, as bishop, and at last he felt himself free to make one final act of generosity. Packing a chest of his precious books, as his habit was, but with foresight adding a shroud, he set off down the Rhine early in 754 accompanied by a band of catechists, priests, deacons, and monks, and destined for the Frisian area beyond Frankish protection. There was a brief and impressive success, and then one morning, 5th June, at Dockum, near the coast, a party of heathen broke in upon his encampment as he was about to hold a confirmation. He and more than fifty of his companions were massacred, and the attackers then turned and fought each other over the treasures they hoped to find in the chests. In their disgust at finding mainly books they scattered the contents among the marshes, but the Christians bore the body of the martyr back to the peace of Fulda.

Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, writing to Lul on receipt of the news, declared that a general synod had instituted the day of martyrdom as an annual feast, and added, 'We seek him speci-



ally as our patron along with blessed Gregory and Augustine'. But perhaps Boniface's pleasantest epitaph had been written years before by a nun: 'Thou too at the resurrection, when the twelve Apostles are seated on their twelve seats, wilt have thy seat there; and over all those whom thou hast won by thy own labours, wilt thou their leader, heir to a golden crown, rejoice before the throne of the Eternal King'.



## THE SYMBOL OF THE MOUNTAIN

D. D. C. POCHIN MOULD

THE collect for the feast of St Catherine of Alexandria, having recalled the legend of the saint's body carried to Mount Sinai by angels, asks that we, by her intercession, may come to the mountain which is Christ. It is a symbol presented with the suddenness of mist clearing from a rocky summit, a dramatic image that brings one back to a consideration of the immense richness of mountain symbolism in liturgy and scripture.

It may well be that the mountain is the easiest of the great symbols of the Church for us to understand today, easier than water or fire, for instance. The townsman is too used to think of water in terms of turning on the tap, of heat and light in terms of pressing switches, but with the hills, he returns to reality; in increasing numbers more and more people are discovering the fascination of mountaineering. It would be interesting to explore the ebb and flow of appreciation of mountain beauty, of the urge to seek out the solitude and silence of the heights, for though the modern sport of climbing is a new growth of the last hundred years or less, the love of the hills is very old indeed. To contrast the language of the psalms about the hills, the attitude of St Anthony in his mountain retreat in the desert, of that of the Celtic saints and of St Francis on Alvernia, with that of eighteenth-century English writers, Dr Johnson's 'hopeless sterility' of the Scottish Highland glens in the west, is to feel that here is more than a mere

change in fashion of outlook. It is a loss of the sense of reverence for things as God's creation, and it is a loss of the rich symbolism of the hills, coupled with a constant looking for commercial profit—the rocks grow no crops. The Reformation would appear to have been the origin of that outlook, for it goes far deeper than the natural reaction of a Lowlander coming into mountain country.

The holy mountain is a constant theme of man's religious ideas. It is natural to look up to heaven, and up to the hills, and see them as a kind of intermediary between the country of men and the country of the gods. They are mysterious, menacing as the mist swirls about their crests, dangerous; beautiful in the bright sunlight with blue sky and flashing cornice of snow. The ascent is hard, a leaving behind of comfort and security in order to attain the peril and splendour of the summit rocks. It comes almost instinctively to conceive of the spiritual life, of the attempt to reach God, as a climb, as an ascent, and of the heights as the natural place to select in which to pray and try to come close to heaven.

But it is more than mere symbolism. In reality, Moses climbed Sinai and Christ was transfigured on the mountain. In reality, Christ went out to pray alone on the hillside, and following his example, a multitude of Christian hermits.

Ireland shows a remarkable link between the old pagan hill myth, the mountain hermitages of the Celtic saints and modern Catholic devotion. Her hilltops are notable for the number of pre-historic burial cairns to be found placed on them, and one at least, in the Mourne mountains, was subsequently adapted to serve as cell and oratory by one of the Celtic saints. The early Irish saints had an acute appreciation of natural beauty linked up with a deep knowledge of the scriptures and sense of their symbolism: as they sought out the hilltops, the one would impinge on and enrich the other, the scriptural symbols taking a new depth and meaning set against the changing lights and shadows of the Irish hillsides. The mountain, the rocks, the springs, the mist and the clouds, the sparkling sea, must have brought them back to the verses in the psalms about these things, and sent them penetrating deeper into their meanings. In Ireland today the memory of these mountain retreats of the Celtic saints is still vivid, enormous crowds make the annual pilgrimage up Croagh Patrick, and some still climb up to the hermitage ruins upon Mount Brandon and Slieve League, but the love of mountain beauty, which was

so marked a feature of the Celtic saints, seems to be largely lost by the modern Irishman. For him, the penitential aspect dominates the climb and the sense of the vision from the summit is forgotten.

To follow in the track of the Celtic saints and search for explanations of the mountain symbols in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, is to discover a whole new country for exploration. For just as the aspect of the real mountain varies, sometimes terrible in storm, sometimes beautiful and attractive, so the symbolism of the mountain is differently explained in different contexts of scripture. It could stand for something evil and terrible, the swelling pride of individuals or of the devil; more often for something good, for Christ or for the Church (Mount Sion) or for the apostles and preachers. The mountain symbolizes the teacher—raised up from the common level, intermediary between earth and heaven.

The mountain too is the symbol of contemplation: of which the historical Moses on Sinai is the type; our own struggling attempts to climb up and God coming down to meet us, as it were half-way, and disclose something of himself to us. It is on the heights that we begin to penetrate the cloud of unknowing.

With that we may come to the striking use of the mountain as a symbol of Christ incarnate in the collect for St Catherine. Perhaps the basic idea is of a very high peak raised far above the lesser heights of prophets and apostles, but the symbol of the high mountain is charged too with the idea of beauty and purity and strength. Yet the image can take us further than that, to the whole Christian idea of the meaning of things.

To climb the mountain which is Christ, or to climb any mountain, means several things. There is the penitential aspect, the self-discipline, the determination to go on up against difficulties and dangers rather than take the easy way down again. And there is the leaving behind of the lush meadows of the lowland, of society, of warmth and security, the roof of the house between you and the storm without. The climber, in love with the beauty of the heights, leaves these things behind to face cold and storm and the traverse of bare rock.

But, as even the most agnostic climbers know, the very fact of scrambling up gives a whole new orientation to one's own affairs and to life in general. Just as the houses in the valley become smaller and smaller, so do one's personal worries set against the



immensity of the hills; the mountaineer gains health of mind as well as of body.

Something similar takes place in the ascent of the mountain of the Lord. In the valley, there is no general view of the pattern of life, we move from house to house, lane to lane, field to field and fail to grasp their essential relationship. Only from above, only from the heights, does the shape and design of reality begin to reveal itself. If then we come to the mountain which is Christ, we come too to an integrated view of the world below, not only climbing up to the heights of prayer but finding that here is the key position for the seeing and comprehending of all lesser things. From this Rock, the design of life and of history becomes apparent; the objects that appear irrelevant and jumbled to the man in the valley are seen in their correct relationships and proportions. It is in Christ and from Christ that the world takes meaning.



## OUR APPROACH TO OTHER CHRISTIANS

MICHAEL RICHARDS

IT is a truism that a controversialist should know and understand his opponent's point of view; but where relations with non-Catholics are concerned, it may well be that the time of controversy is over and that knowledge of others is now to be regarded rather as essential material for the rebuilding of a native Catholicism than as a weapon for attack and defence. The missionary practice of the Church has always been not to destroy a people's beliefs and practices but to correct, supplement and direct them to their true end; and this applies particularly to work amongst other Christians, where we speak from faith to faith. The non-Catholic Christian already believes in and follows our Lord, although his understanding of him is incomplete; it is our task to remove from his mind those misconceptions which hinder the full realization of the truth, making it possible for him to see the Catholic faith as the complete expression of that which he now holds imperfectly. Applying this principle, we need to participate

as fully as possible in those discussions which are most commonly heard amongst Anglicans and Free Churchmen.

The doctrine of the nature of the Church is probably the one most widely discussed at the present time; the recovery amongst Protestants of the idea that there is a Church and that it should be visibly one, largely due to the development of the new style of biblical theology, manifests itself both in the widespread desire to find, or to create, a 'Great Church' and in a strengthening of denominational loyalties. On the one hand we have the work of the World Council of Churches and, in the universities, of the Student Christian Movement, and, on the other, the rise of university denominational societies and the recent publication of a number of books (of which that of the Archbishop of York is best known) setting forth the 'claims' of the different churches. The three reports on doctrinal differences and the possibility of a future synthesis, produced at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury by Anglo-Catholic, Anglican Evangelical and Free Church theologians, all show that whatever the desire for unity 'party' convictions are as strong as ever. To those concerned with the problems which the search for unity involves we need continually to point out that Christian divisions have been with us from the beginning, and that there is no reason why there should not today still be heretics and schismatics and, in the midst of them all, one undivided Church. Non-Catholic apologists accept and defend the idea that there was one Chosen People and one Incarnation; why do they refuse to believe in the unity of the People of God under the new covenant? They will point out that the 'scandal of particularity' is to be faced and accepted by the true believer in Christianity, but will not apply it to the Church itself. One can be too anxious to try to believe that all those calling themselves Christians are somehow right; and do not non-Catholics seem ready to believe everything that we do about the Church, except that it really exists?

The drawing together of Protestants in the World Council of Churches is paralleled by their co-operation in university theological faculties, a co-operation which raises the problem of the nature of theology itself. Only at Oxford is the theological faculty still, officially, an Anglican preserve, and, in normal practice, theology has now become a study independent of church allegiance. It is common now for a believer not to learn from his

Church, but to build his 'churchmanship' from his own study of theology. No longer does the non-Catholic theologian write as the representative of a coherent theological tradition to which he is responsible; he works primarily as a historian, constructing his own version of Christian belief from the documents left us by past ages. That version may or may not differ widely from the one commonly held by the group of which he is a member; he is entitled to his own view of Christianity, and it is as a scholar that he must be judged.

Many difficulties arise from theology's new situation. How, for example, are non-Catholic bodies to decide in future what it is they have to teach as Christian doctrine? The idea of an 'official' theology may be fading among theologians, but some semblance of one is needed if the laity are to be instructed. There are, of course, still the Papalists and the High Churchmen who want the Church of England to accept the Catholic tradition and to remain aloof from other denominations, and the Evangelicals, both Anglican and Free Church, who take a fundamentalist view of Scripture and group themselves in such bodies as the World's Evangelical Alliance and the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. The latter group will probably soon be of greater importance in the Church of England than it has been for a good many years; but it has been strongly influenced by the contemporary insistence on the church as the *milieu* in which the Christian grows and learns his faith, so that the new Evangelicalism will be something more Catholic than the old. It has been noticeable, for example, that the committee of Billy Graham's 'Greater London Crusade' has been careful to arrange that converts are received into the fellowship of the organized churches.

The majority of Anglican clergy, however, are satisfied with neither of these solutions and are anxious to have a theology which is representative of something wider than a single school of thought. One important attempt to establish a basis for theology while taking note of its changed 'university status' is Canon Alan Richardson's *Christian Apologetics*,<sup>1</sup> in which it is argued that theology is an independent science in which the concept of revelation is applied as a principle of interpretation; the facts of sacred history can only be understood if we assume that they are God's declaration of himself and his purpose to men. This



presupposition might seem to save theology from degenerating into no more than a branch of research into a distinctive antique culture, as might well happen in the modern university; but even if it were granted that the Old and New Testaments can only properly be examined in this way, the ordinary Christian would still be left with the problem of deciding between the many different interpretations of the events therein described. It may be worth pointing out that revelation must be more than a sort of quarry from which true doctrine is to be extracted; it must be something which, entrusted to the Church, becomes clearer and more explicit as the Church meditates on it and lives by it.

It is with issues such as these, affecting the very basis of Christian belief, that we need to concern ourselves if we are to speak to the mind of those outside the Church. We might well turn also to a study and critique of non-Catholic answers to the problem of the status of Christian philosophy and the relation of reason and faith. Some theologians and philosophers, like Dr E. L. Mascall (*He Who Is*, 1943; *Existence and Analogy*, 1949; *Corpus Christi*, 1953) and Dr Austin Farrer (*The Glass of Vision*, 1948, and his studies in St Mark and the Apocalypse), lean towards the Catholic point of view; others are more influenced by Paul Tillich and the existentialists. Tillich's *The Shaking of the Foundations* was commended as the book of the year by *Theology* in 1949, and since then his *The Protestant Era*, *Systematic Theology* and *Love, Power and Justice* have been published. Dr A. R. Vidler, the editor of *Theology*, has in several places commended doubt almost as if it were a theological virtue. It is also very common for Anglican philosophers to appeal to the conception of philosophy as an activity rather than as a system; they will ask us to share their activity or to use their hypotheses as useful principles of interpretation, but will not attempt the defence of a settled position. In 1948 and 1949 Professor H. A. Hodges gave us an example of this type of approach in his articles in the *Christian Newsletter*, and, in 1950, Richard Hare defended religious belief in a symposium on 'Theology and Falsification' in *University* by showing that, as a 'presupposition', it governs all our conduct. But such a defence demonstrates only the importance, not the truth of religion; when Professor Hodges says that Christian thinking bases itself on the 'Abrahamic presupposition' that man is in the hands of God, the consequences of which it examines and explains, he

seems to be abandoning all claim to belief in God's existence on the ground of the rational analysis of experience and to be making philosophy depend more closely on theology than Catholics would allow. Such an approach may be valuable in apologetics, or in applying our faith to everyday life, but if our philosophy is to supply a satisfactory system of ideas and method of analysis, it must start from observation, not from 'pre-suppositions'.

There are certainly many other lines of approach to the mind of those outside the Church, which have still to be discovered and explored; our missionary work is hampered by our ignorance of contemporary thought within the Anglican and Free Churches. Perhaps we need a periodical which would make it its business to survey the whole field of thought and activity amongst non-Catholic Christians in this country and to make known the Catholic viewpoint on the problems which face those separated from us. It would be a review with a missionary aim, cultivating all those lines of thought which, if pursued, will lead men to the full truth of Christ; and, forcing us to meet every criticism, it would stimulate the development of every potentiality of our own Catholic tradition. Newman's saying might well be a guide for all who would think and write for foreign as well as for home consumption:

No conclusion is trustworthy which has not been tried by us as enemy as well as friend; no traditions have a claim on us which shrink from criticism, and dare not look a rival in the face.<sup>1</sup>

He was criticizing the Protestant tradition; but this can be the watchword also for all discussion between Protestant and Catholic which has the resolution of our differences and the building up of a common life in the truth as its aim.

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*, 1851. 4th Ed., p. 9.

## SPIRITUAL STUDIES IN ENGLAND\*

DAVID L. GREENSTOCK, D.D.

THE circumstances of life in any country, its history and the racial characteristics of its people all influence, to a greater or a lesser degree, that country's literature, including its theology. The last twenty-five years have seen a change in the atmosphere in which English Catholicity in all its branches has to live, work and develop. Religious controversy still exists, but it is less important now than it was, let us say, fifty years ago. Catholic activity is increasing and there is a marked interest in all the problems relating to the spiritual life.

However, since the English character is essentially practical in its outlook, the study of spiritual theology—to include under that term both ascetical and mystical theology—tends to be mainly directed towards the practical problems of everyday life. The study of spirituality in England tends to restrict itself to the translation of the works of the great mystics, both at home and abroad, and to the divulgation or popularization of those doctrines which have most application to the practice of religion. There is little or no effort made to produce profound studies of the doctrines contained in these mystical writings or in dogmatic theology as such. Indeed, it is very difficult to make English theologians realize the importance of such studies. What interests them most is the practical application of dogma to everyday life. This attitude is by no means a new one, because we can discover it in the writings of English mystics of the fourteenth century. We see it in the *Fire of Love* and the *Form of Perfect Living* by Richard Rolle, in the *Cloud of Unknowing* and also in Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*. Critical editions of all these works have appeared recently; a fact which goes to show the increasing interest in the subject and also perhaps in the ideas contained in these writings.<sup>1</sup>

There are also excellent translations of the Spanish mystics, especially of the works of St Teresa and St John of the Cross.<sup>2</sup> Up to the present, however, there has been no serious study of the doctrines of these writers, at least from the pens of English writers. In his *St Teresa of Jesus* Professor Allison Peers has given us a series of essays on the style of St Teresa, on the more recent Spanish works on the subject (for

\*Summary of a paper read at the International Theological Congress, Salamanca, 4th May, 1954.

<sup>1</sup> *The English Mystics Series*. Orchard Books (Burns Oates, London).

<sup>2</sup> *Complete Works of Teresa of Jesus* (Sheed and Ward, 1946); *The Spirit of Flame* (1943); *Studies of the Spanish Mystics* (S.P.C.K. 1950), *The Complete Works of John of the Cross* (Burns Oates, London, 1953); all by Allison Peers.



example, those of Padre Crisogono) and on the mysticism of Luis de Granada.<sup>1</sup> There are also translations of *Philokalia* (Faber, 1950), the complete works of Eckhart (Watkin, 1951), of Mechtilde of Magdeburg (Longmans, 1952), and the *Theologia Germanica* (Gollancz, 1950). Two small works of Henry Suso have also appeared in translations.<sup>2</sup>

Protestant interest in spiritual theology is also on the increase, although the main lines of Protestant theology are always more scriptural than mystical. Among other publications we may note *Mysticism and Religion* by Dean Inge, *Christian Mysticism and the Natural World* by Joseph Dalby, and *The Venture of Prayer* by Northcott.

Inge's work is too general in terms to merit the name of a profound scientific study of the subject. On the other hand, Dalby's book—a doctorate thesis presented at the University of Oxford—is a serious and conscientious study of a question which has received little attention from theologians and which is not without interest for Catholics. In it the author shows a profound knowledge of the traditions of Catholic mysticism and the chapters on the Dark Night and on Quietism are valuable from many points of view.<sup>3</sup> However, his knowledge of the teachings of St Thomas is clearly superficial on many points, and this is a pity because in the writings of Aquinas Dalby would have discovered the dogmatic basis on which to construct a work of lasting value. In spite of its defects, however, the book is of interest to Catholic students of spiritual theology.

Northcott's work on prayer and its forms has as its foundation the theories of Fr Garrigou-Lagrange, among others. However, once more the true dogmatic foundation is missing from this book, and from a Catholic point of view the author has nothing new to say on his subject.<sup>4</sup>

The greater part of the writings on spiritual topics produced by Catholics in England has for its principal end the more perfect practice of the Christian life in all its forms. The works of Fr M. Eugene Boylan, O.CIST.R., Fr Valentine, O.P., and Fr Gerald Vann, O.P., have had spectacular success in this field, although these authors would be the first to admit that their work is mainly that of divulgation. Some writers have admitted the need for more profound studies of the foundations of the spiritual life. In October 1950 *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* published two articles by Fr Vandenbrouke in which he deplores the separation which certainly exists in some countries, between the study of spiritual theology and that of dogma. Another article in the

1 *St Teresa of Jesus*, by Allison Peers (Faber and Faber, London, 1953).

2 *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*; *The Little Book of Truth* (Faber, London, 1953).

3 *Christian Mysticism and the Natural World*, by Joseph Dalby (J. Clarke, 1950).

4 *The Venture of Prayer*, by Northcott, C.R. (S.P.C.K., 1950).

same review pleads for more exact definitions of the terms used in spiritual theology, such as mystic, contemplation, prayer, etc., but in spite of these efforts one must admit that few English writers seems to realize the need for this precision in the use of terms.

One possible explanation for this lack of attention to definition may be found in the influence of what is called the 'new theology'—at least in that part of it which concerns scholasticism and the use of scholastic terminology. It cannot be denied that some of the ideas and the tendencies of this error were well received at first both in England and America and that even now traces of them can be found in some of the works of English writers. These ideas seemed to some people especially adapted to an easier understanding of the dogmas of faith and to their popular exposition in terms of modern philosophy. Undoubtedly, the history of the study of ascetical and mystical theology in England also helped to form this attitude towards precision in terms, together with the practical English character.

This does not mean to imply that there are no profound studies of spirituality to be found among the works of English writers. As exceptions to the general rule we may note Dom Aelred Graham's *The Love of God, Medieval Mystical Tradition and St John of the Cross* by a Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, and E. I. Watkin's *Poets and Mystics*.<sup>1</sup> The latter serves as an excellent complement to Abbot Butler's *Western Mysticism*. Abbot Butler studies the writings of St Augustine, St Gregory and St Bernard. From them he deduces what we may call the main current of the mystical thought of western Europe. Watkin's book studies the great English mystics, Juliana of Norwich, Margery Kemp, Richard Crashaw, Augustine Baker, Elizabeth of the Trinity and others. The author has succeeded in capturing and conveying the main doctrines and the spirit of these writers in a book which is both interesting and well written.

The English translation of Fr Arintero's work on mystical evolution and the development and life of the Church has aroused interest in England, principally because it applies the general principles of the unity of the spiritual life and of the universal vocation to perfection to the life of the Mystical Body, i.e. to the everyday life of the christian within the framework of the Church and its liturgy.<sup>2</sup> In this book the speculative principles of spiritual theology as they have been formulated by such masters as Fr Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., are reduced to terms of actual practice. The book is also important because a close study of it

<sup>1</sup> *The Love of God*, by Aelred Graham (Catholic Book Club, London, 1939); *Medieval Mystical Tradition and St John of the Cross* (Burns Oates, 1954); *Poets and Mystics*, by E. I. Watkin (Sheed and Ward, London, 1953).

<sup>2</sup> *The Mystical Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church*, by J. G. Arintero, O.P., translated by J. Aumann, O.P. (Herder, 1952).

may easily lead to a radical reform in the methods used to teach ascetical and mystical theology in our seminaries—a need which will be readily admitted by all those who have to explain this subject to students for the priesthood. One advantage of such a reform would be to give priests more confidence in dealing with various types of penitents they meet with in the course of their duties as confessors and directors.

The translations of Fr Garrigou-Lagrange's works have also been carefully studied in England, especially those which deal with perfection and contemplation.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it may be said that his theories with regard to the nature of perfection, the universal call to it in its higher grades and also the unity of the spiritual life are generally accepted in England. This is natural in view of the fact that the English Dominicans have been most active in the field of spiritual studies and in the popularization of its basic doctrines. Their review *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* is the most important in this field.

The tendency to study spiritual theology with special reference to the daily life of the Catholic within the fold of the Church is day to day more obvious and is responsible for the increasing interest in questions pertaining to the liturgy as the main source of that life and the chief instrument in its perfection. There is a recent work by Fr Clifford Howell, S.J., which illustrates this perfectly.<sup>2</sup> As he himself says: 'The liturgical movement and all that it stands for is but a development in action of this basic doctrine of the "Mystical Body of Christ".'

Another field of study which has claimed special attention in England is the psychological element in mystical experience. Here the writings of Fr Victor White, O.P., demand special mention, not merely because of their author's perfect grasp of modern psychology in all its branches, but also because of his clear application of the most difficult psychological principles to religious and mystical experience. His book *God and the Unconscious* is the most important study which has yet appeared in English of the relationship between psychology and religion.<sup>3</sup> There is also an interesting article by Professor Armstrong on the *World of the Senses in Pagan and Religious Thought* in which the author studies the relationship between the world of sense experience and the world of the spirit.<sup>4</sup>

The same degree of praise cannot, however, be extended to a book

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Perfection and Contemplation* (Herder, 1949); *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, two vols. (Herder, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> *The Work of our Redemption*, by Clifford Howell, S.J. (The Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, 1954).

<sup>3</sup> *God and the Unconscious*, by Victor White, O.P. (The Harvill Press, 1953). Cf. *The Frontiers of Theology and Philosophy* (Guild of Pastoral Psychology, No. 19, 1942).

<sup>4</sup> *Downside Review*, Summer, 1950. p. 305.



by a Protestant author on this subject, *The Uncurtained Throne*. This work has as its foundation neo-platonic philosophical principles, and therefore tends to reduce mystical experience to the purely natural and poetical mysticism of the Greeks. Furthermore, the author pretends to discover a religious mysticism which is divorced both from the limitations of dogmatic theology and from the heights of sanctity.

Interesting from this same point of view, namely the relationship between the psychological and the spiritual, is Fr Vann's book *The Water and the Fire* (Collins, 1953). As the author himself admits, his work owes much to such writers as Max Picard, Gustave Thibon and Fr Victor White. The central theme of the book is the renovation of the sense of religious symbolism. Like Jung, Fr Vann believes that symbolism has a very important part to play in religious experience, since by means of it those ineffable mysteries, so difficult to describe in words, can be given their perfect expression. In the light of this view of symbolism it is easy to see the futility of religious positivism and the psychological value of the symbolism of the Mass and the Sacraments. This book has been well received because of the clear and yet profound exposition of a most difficult subject.

This question of religious symbolism in all its forms has also been the subject of many articles in reviews which deal with spiritual theology,<sup>1</sup> and the interest in this subject is increasing. Another interesting book from this point of view is *Neurosis and the Sacraments* by Fr Keenan, O.F.M. (Sheed and Ward, 1950). In it the author explains the many advantages of the Sacraments as spiritual instruments which have an intimate connection with the psychological states of those who receive them. There are also several translations from the French of works dealing with the connection between asceticism, psychology and the practice of religion.<sup>2</sup>

A study has appeared recently in English on the controverted subject of the nature of christian perfection and on the ascetical and mystical ways which has aroused interest both in England and America. In this work, which is an elaboration of a doctorate thesis presented in the University of Salamanca, the author proposes a solution for the reconciliation of the various opinions concerning the nature of perfection, the universal vocation to perfection in its higher grades and the ways to it.<sup>3</sup> This theory has as its foundation two distinctions, one concerning the spiritual life and the other regarding its perfection.

According to the author, the spiritual life can be studied either in

<sup>1</sup> For example, the articles in *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, Aug.-Sept., 1951: among others, 'Aspects of the Chalice', by Dominic Baldwin and 'Symbolism in the Byzantine Rite', by Irene Marinoff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *New Problems and Medical Ethics* (Cahiers Laennec, Paris, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> *Be Ye Perfect*, by David Greenstock (Herder, St Louis, 1951).

itself, absolutely, or in the individual soul. In the first case its nature and development will be governed only by the general ontological laws which apply to all natures, while in the second case it also comes under the special laws of divine providence and predestination for the individual. The grade of glory which God has assigned from all eternity for the individual soul will bear a distinct relationship to the grade of grace which God grants to that individual—to which also corresponds a distinct grade of the spiritual life in him.

From this follows logically a further distinction with regard to the perfection of the spiritual life. Considered in itself, absolutely, it undoubtedly contains everything which, in one way or another, contributes to its growth—all the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their highest grades. In this sense there can be no question of a multiplicity of ways or of lives—there is only one spiritual life, which includes, in germ at least, all ways and all grades.

If this same life as it is found in the individual were not subject to the special laws of providence and predestination the same would also be true in the case of the individual soul. Since, however, this is not so, we must also distinguish between what is essential to the spiritual life and what is individual. The existence of grace and charity is indispensable for that life; while the individual grade of grace and charity which God has predestined for the individual will constitute the individual perfection.

From these basic principles the author draws further conclusions concerning the other elements of the spiritual life, especially with regard to the question of the universality of the vocation to the higher grades of perfection and the purification necessary in purgatory.

This theory has been criticized by some theologians on the grounds that it implies a retreat from well established positions; while other have accepted it as providing a solution for the difficulties contained in the opinions put forward up to now on these points. The author claims that his theory follows logically from the principles laid down by St Thomas.

The study of any science is undoubtedly helped by free and profound discussion of it from various points of view. Therefore the reunions held each year under the auspices of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT are worth noting, as also is the Congress of Ecclesiastical Studies held at Strawberry Hill in 1953.

The 1952 Congress of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT dealt with the common life of the christian under various headings; and the papers were subsequently published in the January, 1953, issue of the review. During the Ecclesiastical Studies Congress in 1953 the Abbot of Downside gave an interesting paper on the subject of mystical prayer. This

conference, published in *Clergy Review*, August, 1953, revealed very clearly the need for careful and exact definition of the basic notions and terms of spiritual theology. While each individual author continues to use such terms as he pleases it will be difficult, not to say impossible, to reach agreement or to forge ahead in this science. This exactness in definition is lacking in many English writers on spiritual problems.

Also interesting from the point of view of the study of spirituality are three conferences of the London Aquinas Society, one by Professor Armstrong on the Greek philosophical basis in the psychology of St Thomas; another by Fr Vann, O.P., on wisdom in Boethius, and a stimulating paper by Fr Conrad Pepler, O.P., on St Thomas as the philosopher of contemplation and the mystic knowledge of God.<sup>1</sup> There is also a small work on the relationship between the natural and supernatural from the aesthetic point of view which has been read with interest in England.<sup>2</sup> In an article in the *Clergy Review*, February, 1950, on the value of controversy in theological matters Canon Carmel has many things to say which have a direct relationship to the study of ascetico-mystical problems. He stresses once again the need to reach agreement on the definitions of the basic terms used in these sciences.

Fr Van Zeller, O.S.B., is an author whose works on spirituality are widely read in England, though they are difficult to classify. At times he penetrates deeply into certain elements of the spiritual life while at others he seems to be quite content with a merely superficial glance at a problem. However, we may say that he has the art of presenting in an extremely popular fashion the whole treatise on the virtues and of applying it to everyday life in a manner which is easy to understand.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly we can note a number of books—many of them translated from the French—on the religious life in general and on the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in particular.<sup>4</sup> From the layman's point of view there is also an increasing interest in the very delicate problem of the possibility of a contemplative life in the world and the means to achieve it. This has been discussed in many articles in theological reviews but so far there is no complete work on it in English.

We may sum up the present state of spiritual studies in England in the following general conclusions:

1. Undoubtedly, interest in the special problems of ascetical and mystical theology is on the increase, although the trends of the English contributions to the study of these sciences are practical rather than speculative, as can be seen not only from the works already quoted but

<sup>1</sup> *Aquinas Society Papers*, Nos. 19, 20 and 21 (Blackfriars Publications).

<sup>2</sup> *De Pulchritudine*, by Fr J. Aumann, O.P. Editorial F.E.D.A. Valencia.

<sup>3</sup> For example, *We Live with our Eyes Open* (Catholic Book Club, 1950).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *The Religious Life Series* (Blackfriars Publications).



also from the interest shown in books on the liturgy in everyday life and in the question of the prayer and life of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

2. There are two branches of spiritual theology which have been widely studied in England and which have produced valuable contributions from our writers. One of these is the question of religious symbolism and the other is the more general problem of the relationship between psychology and mystical or religious experience.

3. The task which English writers consider to be most important at present is that of divulgation. Every effort is being made to bring to the knowledge of the layman in an attractive form the basic spiritual doctrines. This explains the popularity of lives of the saints, books on prayer, the liturgy, the Mass and the sacraments as means of our sanctification. The movement for a more active participation of the laity in the liturgy is very vital in England at the moment and the bishops are considering the question of a new ritual in which many of the prayers used in the administration of the sacraments will be in the vernacular.

Thanks to the efforts of the Dominicans we now have a Review, *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, in which questions pertaining to spiritual theology can be discussed. Many interesting articles have already appeared in it of real value to students of this science. Other reviews, such as *Blackfriars*, *The Clergy Review* and the *Downside Review*, also have articles on spirituality from time to time. Typical of the modern approach to such questions is the recent series on Modern Dilemmas in *Blackfriars*.

4. In spite of the many excellent translations of the works of the mystics, there is little or no attempt made to discuss more deeply the doctrines contained in their writings. Also, with few exceptions, there are no works on the speculative questions which are frequent topics for discussion and writing in other countries. However, some authors have seen and stressed the need for clearer definitions of the basic terms used in ascetical and mystical literature. There is perhaps a danger that the study of symbolism may be carried to excessive lengths—usually a sign of decadence. One would also like to see a more active part played by English theologians in International Congresses to discuss the basic themes of spiritual theology and the problems which are common to all countries. Up to the present the part played by England in such reunions has been mainly passive.

*English College, Valladolid.*

*May, 1954*

1 Cf. *The Splendour of the Liturgy*, by Zundel; *Christ in the Liturgy*, by Iltyd Trethowan (Sheed and Ward, 1951); *The Work of Our Redemption*, by Clifford Howell, S.J. (Catholic Social Guild, 1954).

## REVIEWS

MISSIONARY IN SOUTH AFRICA. By Nicholas Humphreys, O.P., with a foreword by the Rt Rev. Bishop Count David O'Leary, O.M.I., D.D. (Blackfriars Publications; 16s. 6d.)

This remarkable book of missionary experience in the towns and farms of South Africa, where Africans live in the service of Europeans in conditions of greater or lesser misery, and where the problems of the missionary is to find a personal attitude to the problems raised before he can work fruitfully, is a book of great spiritual value to the reader, quite apart from its immense informative and human value. Intended especially for those who are destined to be missionaries, the combination of experience and advice, of trial and error recounted, of vivid personal anecdote and deeply sympathetic, though quite unsentimental or romantic, sketches of African life make it a most valuable work for the future missionary, priest, sister or layman, as well as for all who may have to live in close contact with African peoples outside their primitive life. For the success or failure of a missionary depends to no small extent on his own interior spiritual adjustment to both Europeans and Africans, to a right and understanding charity, not sentimental or romantic, not with self-righteousness or moral indignation, but genuinely ready to enter into the mind and heart of others and to try to lead them higher with a deep respect for their personalities and traditions. It is this 'missionary charity' as it has been called which shines throughout Father Humphrey's book, and the reader can vicariously form his heart on the same pattern against the day when he can gain his own personal experience.

For all in Europe also, faced in their daily press with situations regarding the relations of 'races' to which they need to find a mental and moral attitude, this realistic and charitable book can be of great help. For every Catholic should be a missionary at heart, and such a book as this can help him to do so more securely than the more romantic type of missionary literature.

OSWIN MAGRATH, O.P.

AN HUMBLE SUPPLICATION TO HER MAJESTIE. By Robert Southwell.

Edited by R. C. Bald. (Cambridge University Press; 15s.)

This little book should interest at once those who treasure the memory of the English Martyrs, those who find delving into the life of the sixteenth century a fascinating occupation and those men of letters to whom Blessed Robert Southwell is a poet. The work, an apology for the Catholics and an appeal against the brutality of the penal laws, underlines one of the most tragic aspects of the persecution. If Southwell, Campion and the rest were men of a single purpose, working purely for the love of God and the spiritual welfare of their countrymen, the bluff hunting, shooting, and fishing magistrates who hounded them to death were convinced that they had to do with agents of a foreign power. The authority of Popes over princes, long discussed, had become tragically topical. One can understand the point of view of Father Persons and some of the exiles and of their patron King Philip. One can understand also the point of view of the Queen and her councillors, whose end was purely of this world. One sees why the missionaries wished to be free of all political entanglements. But irresistible historic forces put all three into conflict and the last mentioned had to foot the bill.

There are sidelights on the period in plenty. The Queen is deemed ignorant of the sufferings of the Catholics and therefore not responsible for them. The cry is against her evil councillors, for according to tradition the Sovereign can do no wrong. A royal proclamation, which Mr Bald prints, accused those abroad of being, among other things, 'very base of birth'. Father Southwell felt obliged, in consequence, to say a few words on the pedigree of the majority of his colleagues. (The editor of the French version of the Autobiography of Father John Gerard found it necessary to append a little note explaining, for the benefit of the citizens of the Fourth Republic, the importance of pedigree in Tudor England.) The description of the traditional methods of torture (p. 34) leaves nothing to be desired. The defence, taken from the Scriptures, of his disguise (pp. 8, 9) is delicious. The passages on page 13 and pages 43-45 must be among the finest the Tudor age produced. There are some shrewd hits, too, scored against the government.

The Introduction, putting the work in its context and giving some account of its subsequent history and the use made of it in the unhappy Appellant controversy, is excellent. There are three appendices: the Proclamation of 1591, which largely provoked the Humble Supplication, extracts in Latin from the proceedings in Rome in 1602 in connection with the Appellant affair, and a discussion of the relations between Donne and Southwell.

RICHARD BLUNDELL, S.J.



ORIGENE. Homélie sur le Cantique des Cantiques. Introduction, Traduction et Notes. Dom O. Rousseau. (Sources Chrétiennes 37; Cerf; Blackfriars).

Origen is the first Christian commentator on the Canticle of Canticles whose works are still extant. His two short homilies and his much more developed commentary on this theme passed into the Latin West via the translations of St Jerome and Rufinus. In expounding the Canticle as an allegory of love between Christ and the Church, Origen was using an interpretation already traditional among the Christians of his day, and this tradition itself was a natural transposition from the Jewish explanation of the Canticle as the marriage song between Jahwé and the Chosen People. But Origen added to these two themes yet a third, that of the love between the Word and the Soul, and it was this theme, with its Neo-Platonic overtones, which was to influence so greatly St Bernard and the other twelfth-century commentators of the Cistercian school, who were immensely interested in the psychology of the soul. It is remarkable, however, that Bede, whose commentary on this theme was also destined to be influential in the twelfth century, since it formed the basis of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the Canticle, relied very little on Origen and certainly omitted anything that might be called Neo-Platonic.

In this edition, then, of the Homilies on the Canticle, Dom Rousseau has made easily accessible to us one of Origen's most influential works and he has prefaced it with an interesting and instructive introduction; the section on the hidden allusions to the Canticle in the New Testament being particularly suggestive. The translation is, on the whole, clear and pleasantly readable. The word 'accendatur' appears to have been accidentally omitted from the second line on page 65. The excellent footnotes contribute much towards enabling one to appreciate the text, and this is specially true of those allegorical allusions which would otherwise be missed by the modern reader, who is usually unaccustomed to the Patristic and medieval habit of regarding the words of Scripture as the flesh veiling the hidden spirit within. A section explaining the four senses of Scripture would have been a useful addition to the introduction and might, perhaps, have replaced that section (pp. 28-30) dealing with a thesis put forward by A. Nygren in his book *Eros and Agape*. Though Nygren's thesis is important and extremely interesting, any consideration of it, beyond a footnote, seems to me to be outside the scope of the work under review. As it is, Dom Rousseau's treatment of this thesis and its relation to Origen's thought is too superficial for the expert and yet somewhat confusing for the layman.

A. J. MEIKLE

THE SCALE OF PERFECTION. By Walter Hilton. Translated into Modern English, with an introduction and notes by Dom Gerard Sitwell, O.S.B. (Burns Oates; 18s.)

The revised *Orchard Series* is once more making available, though at a much enhanced price, the great spiritual classics (especially those of English authorship) in authoritative critical editions. The present Master of St Benet's Hall, following the example of his predecessor, Abbot Justin McCann (with whom the series has been so closely associated), combines an exact scholarship with a temperate regard for the needs of the usual reader. Thus while the introduction gives adequate information on texts and earlier printed editions—a full critical edition has still to appear—Dom Sitwell reasonably argues that Walter Hilton's spiritual teaching deserves to be available now in modern English, even though the experts may yet have much work to do on the numerous manuscripts and on the analysis of Hilton's sources. Works of spirituality, like any others, can become the specialized preserve of technicians; and the truth they have to declare may seem secondary to the textual problems they arouse. Thus Dom Sitwell's balanced combination of respect for the document with love for the doctrine it teaches (and hence with the desire to make it intelligible to modern readers), is welcomed.

Walter Hilton is a man of his own (fourteenth) century. He does not—and how can he be expected to?—anticipate later controversies, and to hope to find in him the systematized methods of Counter-Reformation teaching on prayer and contemplation is to misunderstand his purpose and the organic simplicity of *The Scale*. For him, as Dom Sitwell clearly shows, 'contemplation is not a sort of "mystery" to which only the initiated can attain, but is simply the manifestation of a more than ordinary degree of holiness to which everyone should, at least remotely, aspire'. The simple strength of his teaching by-passes the complicated territory which the *devotio moderna* and its later developments have left as a legacy to Catholic spirituality. And that is why it can be an unprofitable occupation to analyse or compare: Hilton is urging men to seek God, to be united with him in contemplation, and the means he proposes are the radical ones of practising the virtues of faith, hope and charity, and growth in prayer and mortification. His evangelical purpose is at the centre of Christian life, and it is good that it should be re-stated at this moment when there was never so great a need for a return to what is essential—'offer to our Lord what should be the only desire of your heart, the desire to possess him and nothing else'. (Cap. 23).

Dom Sitwell's version reads freely, devoid as it is both of archaic 'atmosphere' and self-conscious 'modernity'.

I.E.

A HANDBOOK TO THE LIFE & TIMES OF ST TERESA & ST JOHN OF THE CROSS. By E. Allison Peers. (Burns Oates; 21s.)

Readers of the life and works of the two great Spanish mystics are often left in a whirl of personalities and places, leaving them uncertain of the total picture. Events happened so rapidly and St Teresa wrote and rode with such vigour and speed that it is difficult to keep up with her. Professor Allison Peers before his death had produced this *Handbook* (which was in the press when he died) to assist the reader and student to form a total picture of the history of the Carmelite Reform under the two saints and he succeeded, as he alone could be expected to succeed, in such a work of synthesis and indexing. The first part of the work gives a conspectus of the whole history from the birth of the Saint Teresa till some years after the death of both saints when the Reform was finally established. This is followed by short biographical notes on all the personalities referred to in the life and works of the two mystics. And finally there are lists and descriptions of the convents and priories of the Reform as well as all the places connected therewith and a chronological outline in parallel columns of the lives of St Teresa and St John and of events in the Carmelite Order. The *Handbook* forms a perfect appendix to the eight volumes of the English version of the works of these two saints, for which among all his other writings Professor Peers will be best known and most to be thanked. It was fitting that this summary should have been his last work and it will prove to be an essential addition to those eight volumes on the shelves of every student of mystical theology and of Spanish history.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

THE NEW TOWER OF BABEL. By Dietrich von Hildebrand. (P. J. Kenedy and Sons; \$3.00).

In this book, which confronts a number of contemporary intellectual and practical 'heresies', Professor von Hildebrand's approach is deep rather than acute. There is no sharp-shooting of opponents. Rather, he proceeds at a reflective and contemplative pace, calmly casting the light of the *philosophia perennis*—his debt to St Augustine is particularly in evidence—on our modern situation. The result is all the more effective. Indeed, it is both refreshing and impressive to see the contemplative themes of truth, love, and reverence, all set to the key of that *religio* which is the response proper to man's fundamental status of creaturehood, acting as a solvent on all the empiricisms, relativisms, and efficiency-cults which, consciously or unconsciously, function as



temptations to the christian conscience in our time. Not the least value of this book, for instance, at a time when many christians are tempted to express the eternal christian challenge to the world in existentialist terms, is how it shows up the Sartrean doctrine of choice for the fundamentally mean and tawdry thing it really is.

Written primarily for philosophers, this book does not at first sight have the usual appearance of 'spiritual reading'. Yet it is precisely as such that it may confidently be recommended to all at least who read modern books and listen to wireless talks. There can be no truly contemplative life without *ascesis*. And if theology be the proper mental nourishment of christian contemplation, this book shows how philosophy, acting as the handmaid of theology, may very effectively work a purification of the christian mind from the seductions of contemporary thought and thus render the whole man more prompt and single-minded in his response to the saving truths of the Faith.

R.T. •

LIVING THE CREED. By Carroll E. Simcox. (Dacre Press; 10s. 6d.)

THE TRIPTYCH OF THE KINGDOM. By N. G. M. Van Doornik, Rev. S. Jelsma, and Rev. A. van de Lisdonk. (Sands; 15s.)

These two books have one attribute in common: they affirm that a christian believes in a Person before a code; Christ is prior to the Creed. After that they differ widely. Dr Simcox, an Episcopal pastor in New England, writes a very lively and practical exposition of the Creed to illustrate his belief that we may know it as we know a house, from the outside and from the inside. The best knowledge comes from living inside where we get to know Christ as a person. However, Dr Simcox is eager to offend no one, and when he comes to a disputed point of dogma he seeks, and admits it, to evade the issue. To defend the evasion he uses his house simile: 'We are trying in this book to take as much for granted as possible the outside of the house, the dogmas, while we explore the treasure within'. So he regrets that 'we Christians have done our best, or our worst, to defile it [the dogma of the virgin birth] with ugly controversy'. But if dogmas really are the walls of our house and we neglect to point them, the house will fall down. A responsible householder will inspect the fabric of his building and if he is wise he will consult an architect from time to time. Moreover, Christ has left us an architect to maintain the Church's house: 'Thou art Peter . . . he who heareth you heareth me'. To base the christian life on the Creed

alone is like building a house and expecting it to maintain itself. The Word of God speaks not only through creeds but through the authoritative voice of the successor of St Peter. Perhaps that sounds unkindly and intransigent, but when the principle of living authority is abandoned the alternative is a benevolent agnosticism which has not strength to provide a rule of life. Hence we find conclusions such as, 'This belief [the perpetual virginity of our Lady] too we are not concerned now to affirm or to deny'. The trumpet gives an uncertain sound and we are left to flounder for an interpretation of its summons. This is a great pity in such a stimulating book. But for all its vagueness and lack of authoritative statement I think informed Catholics, once warned of the odd dogmatic lapses, could gain much from reading it, because of its sharp sense of reality and the religious needs of modern life and above all because of its reverence for the mysteries of religion and deep sense of the importance of Christ himself.

*The Triptych of the Kingdom* is a very different work. Written by three Dutch priests, it is the fruit of their work in *Una Sancta House*, an establishment in The Hague devoted to the instruction of converts. These writers speak with the authority of experience because for some time *Una Sancta* has instructed and received about 250 converts a year, not to mention enquirers who did not complete the course. The course is comprised here in just under five hundred pages and works from the notion of God through the story of the Chosen People and the foundation of the Church; the structure and teaching of the Church; life in the Church seen in the liturgy, the moral law and prayer; to the four last things, ending appropriately with the resurrection of the body. It is rounded off with a neat thirty-page summary which will provide invaluable notes for priests giving instructions. The book, however, should be welcomed not only by those dealing with converts but by all Catholics interested in their religion seriously. The fundamental truths are made real in plain language with a complete absence of clichés and scarcely any technical jargon. One may turn up any page in the book and find a lucid explanation that makes contact with modern life without ever leaving basic principles; instance the brief but thorough treatment of Confession. In a similar fashion the early history of the Church comes to life with many a piquant touch. Thus after the death of St Peter we read, 'It is not to be expected that a college of cardinals was immediately found to elect a successor'. From evidence of this sort one can only conclude that the translation from the Dutch must be first-rate. Finally—a comment it is rarely possible to make these days—the book is inexpensive, and very well got up, too.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

CORPUS CHRISTI. By E. L. Mascall. (Longmans; 5s.)

SACRIFICE: A DOCTRINAL HOMILY. By F. Hastings Smyth. (Vantage Press Inc.; \$2.75.)

Dr Mascall's book is a collection of essays, some of which have already been published, mainly on points of Eucharistic theology, and fairly representative of the 'Catholic' school of thought in the Church of England. An introductory essay on the Unity of the Church reflects a deep sense of the supernatural character of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. As we should expect, Dr Mascall rejects the Papacy as the centre of visible unity, but on the rather ingenious pretext that it is conferred by election and not by ordination. It would seem that point at issue here is not the method of conferring the Papacy, but whether or not it is part of the pattern laid down by Christ himself in founding his Church on St Peter and the Apostles. In the following chapters Dr Mascall discusses the views of modern Catholic theologians de la Taille, Vonier and Masure, on the nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice with sympathetic if critical understanding, and in a way which shows a remarkable acquaintance with the post-Tridentine theology of the Mass. The essay on the Eucharistic theology of St Thomas, while it pays tribute to St Thomas's work in this field, yet shows that the author has not fully understood St Thomas's doctrine of sacramental symbolism: and after trying to follow Dr Mascall's explanation of transubstantiation one may take leave to doubt whether it is St Thomas's theory which needs to be saved from 'metaphysical absurdity'.

In a more systematic, though less specialized work, Mr Hastings Smyth is primarily concerned to reaffirm the social implications of the Incarnation in the modern world. The success of marxist materialism has been due to the 'discovery' that man is not a purely spiritual being but is involved by his very nature in the material order. Christianity cannot combat this materialism effectively by a 'purely spiritual' presentation of its truths: there must be a return to the full realization of the doctrine of the Incarnation, 'of Very God Himself assuming the elements of our material order into His Body and Blood; and in this way bringing mankind back both in body and soul into a new world order conformable to the will of God'.

One of the chief means of achieving this, according to the author, is through sacrifice, or rather through the preparation of the materials required for the Christian Sacrifice. These materials, elaborated within the 'social structure', can be looked upon as representing the society from which they emerge, and by incorporation into the Sacrifice they become the means of social redemption. This idea of the social 'background' of the victim, the author claims, was an important element in the evolution of the concept of sacrifice, and accounts



for the fact that before the coming of Christ there could be no perfect victim, for fallen humanity could not produce one. Our Lord 'finally solved the problem of successful sacrifice' by preparing a perfect substance for sacrifice, his own humanity. Through the 'dynamic continuation in time of our Lord's unique sacrifice' Christians are now able to participate in the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb without blemish. What is the mode of this participation? The author rejects the 'spiritual' sacrifices which the Reformers sought to substitute for the Mass; true sacrifice involves the offering of material substances. Thus he sees in the preparation and provision of the material bread and wine the chief means of participation in the Mass. The Offertory, on this view, becomes the most important part of the Mass. Protestants err in placing too much emphasis on the Communion, Catholics on the Consecration. Catholic doctrine, of course, gives due importance to all three as the essential parts of the Mass. The provision by the faithful of the material bread and wine for the Sacrifice can be and often is encouraged as an expression of real participation in the Mass, but the danger of over-emphasis on this practice is that of looking on the bread and wine as the actual victims of the sacrifice, as seems to be implied in such phrases as: 'Our Lord does not cease to prepare additional victims to be offered as gifts to His Father', or 'Portions of Bread and Wine are the sacrificial victims established for His Church by our Lord'.

On the subject of transubstantiation the author departs from Catholic teaching, proposing a novel and extremely complicated explanation based on his 'materialistic' view of sacrifice. As far as one can understand it, the bread and wine undergo a double change: first at the Offertory, when by a process called 'ensubstantiation' they are incorporated into the 'natural' Body and Blood of Christ; secondly at the Consecration, when they become the glorified Christ. Again we must confess that St Thomas's explanation is simplicity itself compared to modern Anglican tortuosities on this subject.

EGBERT COLE, O.P.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD: THE AWAKENER. By Albert D. Belden, D.D. (Rockliff; 30s.)

The revised and abundantly illustrated edition of this book which first appeared in 1930 is a welcome addition to the history of the religious revival of the eighteenth century. Whitefield's success, like that of the early Quakers, was felt on both sides of the Atlantic; and it may be that today we owe the friendship between U.S.A. and England to the religious bond forged by people like Whitefield, Penn and the

Wesleys. The Catholic reader should note the constant insistence on experience which to him is so very intimate an affair but in Methodism plays such a central part in the social aspect of religion. Of Whitefield's first conversion Dr Belden writes: 'There and then he experienced an accession of moral power whereby he overcame his secret sin'. It was towards such experience that Whitefield's tremendous open-air apostolate was directed. While admitting the danger of an exclusive reliance on such experience, it might be suggested that Catholics have grown over-suspicious of such elements in their religion and that a sympathetic study of this in the Catholics faith would bring a greater possibility of understanding the Methodist standpoint. For this reason the study of this and other similar books should prove of value.

C.P.

LIVING CHRISTIANITY. By Michael de la Bedoyere. (Burns Oates; 15s.)

This is a transposed autobiography, written in a style which is a cross between the editorial columns, and 'jotter', of *The Catholic Herald*. It is not a calm and careful thesis; it is bitty and sometimes rambling. But it has two great virtues: it is honest, and it deals with real problems. The autobiographical element is useful here. The problems of the layman's status in the Church, and the problems facing the layman wishing to live up to his vocation as a christian, are still so all-embracing that they may perhaps be best suggested in a description of individual experience.

To some extent the book is out of date. The author's own experience has been determined by the education he received between thirty and forty years ago. It seems impossible that quite such a radical divorce survives between the Christian mysteries and 'religion', as then taught; however we still encounter its shades and sometimes meet the near-Manicheanism, which was associated with it; the author's description of his experience may therefore be useful. In his chapter 'The Missing Link' he refers to the absence, simply, of 'God'. So much attention was paid to 'morals' from a point of view almost ludicrously far from the moral reality of the child's life that little of God's ultimate reality got through. However, the result, in the author's case, has been to strengthen his own yearning, by reaction, to understand the 'isness' of God. This desire widens out into a desire to understand the whole of 'living Christianity' within the unity of man himself, indeed as the expression of man himself.

The details of the book are generally speaking what one would expect; they comprise an intelligent review of current problems in the

Church. The chapter on Mass and the People happily echoes Father Howell, S.J. The references to sex and marriage suggest—they do no more—the enormous field which is waiting to be explored by theologians, lay and clerical. Hell and Limbo are surveyed and the references are given to recent treatment of them in *The Downside Review*. There is a piece about the danger of the impersonality of Confession being abused by a purely automatic approach, but not much development of the other positive possibility of a personal approach leading to a more fruitful use of this sacrament.

One of the most telling themes which runs through the book, and one of the most searching criticisms of recent Catholic practice, concerns the Bible. The author tells us of the extraordinary lack of biblical reading in his own education, his total ignorance of the Old Testament, and his very substantial ignorance of the New Testament. He indicates also how the Bible can be the foundation of a living christianity.

As far as it goes the book is useful. But I am left with the impression that the author of Von Hügel's biography could provide us with a more important book, and one that is not necessarily more difficult to read. Two quotations will indicate the sort of themes which could be developed. 'The underlying sense that the laity enjoys associated membership of the Church, as opposed to full membership, is not dead. . . . No man gives of his best and works up a full keenness of interest unless he feels he is trusted to share genuine initiative and responsibility. . . . There is one field of activity which is often apostolic in character where the layman plays a leading part, namely in writing and journalism. . . . Has not the lay contribution in this field been a very valuable one and has it not been carried out in a loyal informed and responsible manner? The fact makes one wonder whether a similar trust in other fields, in parish work, in societies and organizations, in Catholic Actions, would not bring remarkable results?

The second quotation is from Von Hügel, quoted by the author, words which could inspire him to a deeper, more sustained and carefully worked out contribution to our problems: 'The soul finds that its sheet anchor is its interior (i.e. formally willed) truthfulness—its humble faithful loving seeking of material objective truth by an ever-growing purity of disposition and intention, and an ever-increasing attempt to become and to be all it knows. And it would rather keep on thus, seeking truth sincerely and with self-humiliation, and thus unconsciously itself grow more like the truth which it seeks and which is already inwardly impelling such a soul; than hold truth in such a static and self-complacent manner, as to arrest its own further approximation and apprehension of that truth.'

JOHN M. TODD



LES PAUVRES DE YAHWE. By A. Gelin. Témoins de Dieu, No. 14; (Cerf: Blackfriars).

In a previous work of outstanding importance despite its slender form (*Les Idées Maitresses de l'Ancien Testament*, Lectio Divina series, No. 2), the Abbé Gelin had suggested the biblical theme of the 'weak things of this world', or the action of God through lowly human instruments. In the present work the theme is worked out in a very readable yet scholarly form. For some years now there has been much study and writing, especially on the Continent, on or around the *anawim* or 'poor ones' of Yahweh who came to play so important, if largely hidden, a part in the spiritual history and contribution of Israel. The Abbé Gelin has admirably summed up the essential history and significance of these folk who were first called 'the poor' by the prophet Sophonias, about 640-630 B.C. 'I will still have among you a poor and lowly people, and they will put their faith in the name of the Lord, this Rest of Israel . . .' (Soph. 3, 12). Thus we have an introductory chapter on the notion and vocabulary of poverty in the Old Testament, then the 'Church' or Assembly of the 'poor' from Sophonias onwards, their spirituality (Chapter III), their later history and Messianic expectations. Then a magnificent section on the *Magnificat* presented as the lowly and humble Maiden's song of poverty, and a chapter on New Testament poverty, which can hardly be dissociated from that *tapeinosis*, or lowliness, humility, which so essentially came into the world with our religion, for (as Mr Gladstone said) 'humility as a sovereign grace is the creation of Christianity'. The last words of the conclusion are a citation from St Theresa of Lisieux: 'Fear not: the more thou art poor, the more will Jesus love you'. This is a lesson which desperately needs to be learnt in the England, even in the Catholic England of today. May we hope that this excellent little book will soon be translated into English:

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

## NOTICES

### NON-CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

SEVERAL books have recently appeared, particularly from Anglican publishers, which set out to provide *Spiritual Guidance* of a traditional kind for the ordinary reader. The first is a work with this title by Fr Shirley Hughson, O.M.C. (Mowbrays; 12s. 6d.), who quotes broadly not only from the Scriptures and the Fathers, but from St Thomas,

Tanqueray, Scaramelli, Vonier and Grou. With such a background we are not surprised to find the traditional scheme set forth. The author insists that all men have an obligation to perfection, but he leaves this point a little vague, having failed to thrust home the teaching of St Thomas that christian perfection is nothing more nor less than charity—Fr Hughson views the matter perhaps too exclusively from the point of obedience to the divine authority of providence. He rightly and courageously links the question of the spiritual life with the Eucharist, though here again he misses a great opportunity in omitting the teaching of the same doctor that the ultimate effect of the Eucharist is actual charity, not merely, as the author states, 'a general means looking to the building up of the spiritual man at every point'. The Love of God is the point of prayer and the christian life, and we have far too long lost sight of this great truth in the analyses of our way to God.

Dr Lumsden Barkway sets out to provide a manual concerning the inner life in *An Introduction to the Inner Life* (Mowbrays; 6s.). He also very rightly links up the inner life with the sacraments and strongly deprecates the modern fashion of turning to oriental, non-sacramental mysticism for inspiration. This he sees as leading to a vacuum and a 'sterile poverty of thought'. So sound is Dr Barkway's general teaching that it is a pity to find him castigating a conception of Jesuit obedience which is far from objective fact—a misunderstanding which leads us to think that the fulness of the Church's teaching on the nature and practice of obedience would have set the seal on his book and made it a very useful manual indeed for those who wish to lead the christian life seriously and fully.

Dr Albert Belden, again, in *The Practice of Prayer* (Rockliff; 6s.) provides the reader with a very practical and telling invitation to the spiritual life in terms of prayer which he sees as leading the Christian, in its heights, to the identification of the soul with the divine desire, so that the Christian prays with God and not merely to him. But once more a still deeper appreciation of the traditional teaching would have given his work an even greater strength and value. He sees God as limiting himself by the creation of human liberty so that the desire of God holds within it the suggestion of something not yet fulfilled. Humanly speaking we may get away with that sort of picture, but when it comes to discovering the heights we need to be surer about the relation of free will and grace. However, we must conclude by saying that if non-Catholics are being sustained in their Christian life by such works as these they are receiving many advantages denied to their parents. These books will get them a long way in the search for union with God.

## OTHER WORKS

LA VIE DU PETIT ST PLACIDE (Desclée de Brouwer; 60 belg. francs) is told in 104 delightful charcoal drawings, somewhat reminiscent of the work of Thomas Derrick, by a Benedictine nun, Soeur Geneviève Gallois, O.S.B. The saint is seen to enter the order as a child under St Benedict himself, but before he dies he visits an exhibition of abstract art. 'When God who is Master of Arts', he says, 'and the Father of good sense wishes to reveal to us something of the ineffable Abstract, he begins by putting on the Concrete, and that is the Incarnation.' There is much to please the eye and the mind in this concrete book, which Marcelle Auclair in the preface calls 'un traité d'oraison par l'image'.

Miss Elizabeth C. Fenn had the fruitful thought to translate selections from the *Meditations and Devotions* of Fénelon (Mowbrays; 3s. 6d.), and though the thought is clothed in different garments from those of St Bernard and St Albert the Great who are listed in the same *Fleur de Lys* series of the publishers, it retains the same essential simplicity of a saintly author. The majority of these selections is in the form of meditated prayers, but they can well be used also for brief spiritual reading.

THE NEWLY CANONIZED ST PIUS X had already found an English biographer as long ago as 1918. There must be a large number of people who know Pius X principally through that straightforward account by F. A. Forbes. It is now republished in a revised form to herald the Canonization: *Pope St Pius X* by F. A. Forbes. (Burns Oates; 5s.)

PÈRE LAURENTIN, Professor of Theology at Angers, has written a well documented and profound little book on our Lady and the Mass. This is not merely a work of devotion, for the author discusses Mary's part in the redemption with calm theological insight. Moreover, the book is written as a contribution to the Peace of the World—a refreshing book to come across, as there are so few of its kind in these days when aggression and war remain uppermost in our minds: *Notre Dame et La Messe au service de la Paix du Christ*, by René Laurentin. (Desclée; 36 belg. francs.)

## EXTRACTS

AN International Theological Congress was held in Salamanca from the 29th of April to the 8th of May, to celebrate the seventh centenary of the University. To facilitate the working of the extensive programme the Congress was divided into four main sections: Scripture, Philosophy and Theology, Spirituality and Canon Law.

The section on spirituality had for its main theme the present state of spiritual studies in the world, and the conferences included discussions



on methodology in the study of ascetics and mystics, the use of and definition of terms, the principles of the spiritual life and their development together with its various forms. The psychological aspects of the religious life were also discussed, together with the history of Spanish spirituality from the Middle Ages to the present day. Papers were also read on the state of spiritual studies in other countries and also among the various religious orders. The whole idea of this section of the Congress was informative, i.e. to get a general picture of the present state of spiritual studies as a preliminary to further investigation and discussion. In this sense it was a great success, and the volume containing the various papers which is due for publication this year should be of great value for the mass of detailed information it contains.

Perhaps one of the most important results of the Congress was the obvious need it revealed of clear definitions of the terms most commonly used in ascetical and mystical theology. Obviously, it would be difficult—if not impossible—to reach agreement at the moment on what scholars call the 'real' definitions of such terms, but a start could be made with nominal definitions, both from the etymological aspect and also the historical. The work implied would be very great, but it should be possible, given the co-operation of individuals, societies, religious orders and the frequent reunion of international Congresses on this point. Some members suggested the formation of an international society for the study and co-ordination of information on matters pertaining to spiritual theology.

The programme of the spirituality section was a heavy one, which limited somewhat the time given to discussion. This was a defect which might have been remedied by omitting the reading of the papers concerned with the work done by the religious orders. Such papers, of incalculable value for the published work, had to be given in the form of a summary in half an hour—clearly an impossible task.

The papers on the psychology of religious experience and on the adaptation of the seminary course in experimental psychology to pastoral work were extremely interesting. So, too, was the final paper on the scientific plan of an ideal spiritual theology.

DAVID GREENSTOCK, D.D.

AT THE SAME time and place the Dominican editors of 'Reviews of Spirituality' met for the fourth time. As at the previous meeting, their agreement centred on two main points:

- (a) Each Review must be adapted to the needs of its own public; it must with the grace of God and under the authority of the editor's superiors determine freely its own 'politics'.
- (b) All the Reviews share the same ideals especially regarding the

doctrinal and thomist teaching applied to the spiritual life, and the Dominican and yet *catholic* direction of their aims; that is, they call on contributors and address readers of all 'the spiritual families'.

The Editors took occasion of their meeting on Spanish soil to speak of the great work and saintly life of Padre Arintero, O.P., founder of the Spanish spiritual review *La Vida Sobrenatural*, and engaged to make his great contribution to mystical theology better known and to advance his 'cause' for beatification.

#### RELIGIOUS SCORE-CARD

THE SWISS review *Orientierung* (January, 1954) gives an interesting list of members of Religious Orders and Congregations of men, from which we draw a selection.

	1940	1952	%Increase
Jesuits ... ..	24,198	30,014	24.7
Franciscans ... ..	22,788	24,993	9.6
Capuchins ... ..	12,828	14,185	10.1
Benedictines ... ..	9,249	10,500	13.6
Dominicans ... ..	6,074	8,543	40.5
Conventuals ... ..	2,422	3,650	51.2
Discalced Carmelites ... ..	2,748	3,433	25.4
Trappists ... ..	2,877	3,420	18.7
Carmelites ... ..	1,710	2,134	24.9
Salesians ... ..	10,656	16,910	58.7
Redemptorists ... ..	6,277	7,850	19.2
Brothers of Christian Schools ...	14,353	14,747	2.7

With two exceptions there was an increase in those twelve years ranging from 2.7 per cent to 58.7 per cent. The total number of men in Religious Orders in 1952 was 114,508, showing an increase of 19.13 per cent since 1940. Similarly of men in Congregations, 81,013 with an increase of 33.54 per cent, and in Religious Institutes, 31,986 with an increase of 15.73 per cent. Progress, therefore, seems to have been assisted by the war years.

IN MAY we received by the same post two issues of *Vita Cristiana* (Florence), being the January-February and the March-April numbers, with a message from the Editor to the readers.

With this issue *Vita Cristiana* comes once more into the hands of all its old subscribers, with the hope of being well received and made known to other friends.

A review with such a happy and contemplative indifference to time and able to exercise the second of the theological virtues with such equanimity deserves every success in the kingdom of spiritual reviews. May it long continue to ride above the mad rush of contemporaneity.